

Mechanical Memories Magazine

ISSUE 41

JAN. 2010



The only UK magazine dedicated to vintage penny slot machines

Mechanical Memories Magazine

Mechanical Memories Magazine is a subscriber magazine published monthly, except August. When subscribing, please forward your **Name, Address and Telephone number** to the address below and make cheques payable to: Mechanical Memories Magazine

You may also pay online at: www.pennymachines.co.uk/MMM.htm

Annual Subscription (11 issues)

UK £25 inc. UK postage (£26 by Paypal)

Europe £33 inc. airmail

Rest of the world £40 inc. airmail

(International subscriptions are only available by Paypal)

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www.pennymachines.co.uk/MMM.htm

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Editorial

Hello, and happy New Year to you all! Yes, I know the New Year thing seems ages ago now, but I'm hoping you will at least be reading this in January. Regular readers will be used to it by now, but for the benefit of new subscribers, I'm afraid the magazine is occasionally late (well OK, usually late). In fairness, this issue should have been out earlier, but I've had a stinking cold for over a week now and have felt pretty rough. Anyway, I'll try to ensure the February magazine isn't quite so late.

Talking of cold, what a crap winter it's been so far? I suppose we've been spoilt with relatively mild winters in recent years, so we're just not used to it. Have any of you managed to plough your way through the snow, and made it to the workshop at the end of the garden to get some work done on a project or two? I'm hoping we can get a series of articles going this year on readers' restoration jobs. If you've been working on a machine recently, restoring an old wreck to its former glory, do let us know all about it. Stuart Dale's got the ball rolling this month with news of an interesting little pinball he has recently restored (picture on front cover). If you don't have restoration jobs to report on, please write about something – I'm running out of articles!

Well, that's about it for now,

Till next time

All the best

Jerry

News and Coming Events

Bonhams Sales

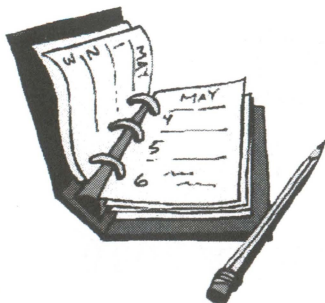
Laurence Fisher (head of Bonhams mechanical music dept.) contacted me shortly before Christmas, and informed me that from this year all slot machine and coin-op items will be concentrated at the Knowle sales, rather than Knightsbridge. This makes sense for many of us, Knowle being more centrally located. Parking is also less of a problem at Knowle, (even though on my last visit I had to park about half a mile down the road, but I did get parked). Higher value mechanical music items will continue to be offered in the Knightsbridge sales. I shall, as usual, bring to the notice of readers any items of interest coming up at the Bonhams sales nearer the time.

Hastings Pier

I was talking to an old friend a while back, and during the course of our conversation the subject of Hastings pier arose. The pier has been closed for about three years now, due to structural concerns. The owners (an offshore company based in Panama) seem to have done a runner, and all in all, the future of the pier doesn't look good. There was some hope that the pier would be taken over by the owners of the Grand pier, Weston-Super-Mare, who have made several visits to Hastings to survey the pier. Unfortunately, last November their engineers advised the cost of making the pier structurally safe would be in the region of £25M, so the owners of Grand pier have said they cannot make a commercial case for taking it on.

Some of you will remember I operated machines on the pier briefly in the late 1990s, which was not one of my greatest ventures! The pier was, in my view, not commercially viable then, and frankly I cannot see it being viable in the future. I fear that this once great seaside pier could be facing a similar fate to the Brighton West pier (part of which literally fell into the sea a few years back). I do wonder for how long our seaside piers were expected to stand when they were built. Nothing lasts forever, and huge structures built from iron and steel, standing in salt water will surely have a finite lifetime. Hastings pier has stood for almost one hundred and forty years, so has perhaps had more than a fair run for its money.

I shall be keeping a watch on developments during the course of this year, as the structural integrity of the pier is deteriorating fast, and if it is to be restored, it probably needs to commence pretty soon.



Dates for your diary

Brighton Jukebox Show 17th & 18th April
Brighton racecourse

Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale 28th April
Knightsbridge

Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale 18th May
Knowle

Great Dorset Steam Fair 1st – 5th September
Tarrant Hinton, Dorset

Jukebox Madness Show 25th & 26th September
Kempton Park racecourse

MMM Vintage Slot Collectors' Show & Auction 28th November
Coventry (Provisional)

Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale 7th December
Knowle

Don't forget – if you know of any event which would be of interest to readers of the magazine, please let me know so that I can include details in these pages.

Dreamland

MARGATE

Save Dreamland Update January 2010

One of the most exciting things we have been able to do as part of the campaign to save Dreamland has been to go out and rescue historic amusement park rides from parks that are closing down. Our biggest logistical exercise was to rescue the remaining rides from Southport Pleasureland in 2007, after the park was closed by its owners, Blackpool Pleasure Beach. Our contractors (Hopkinson Construction Engineering Ltd, who had just finished building the Nightmare roller coaster at Camelot) started work on dismantling the wooden Wild Mouse coaster on Wednesday 6 June 2007 and worked on dismantling the other rides for about a month. The Wild Mouse, the most complex of the rides to dismantle and transport (and the most costly at £25,000!), was numbered and photographed and is now in container storage until work starts on the Dreamland Heritage Amusement Park project.

We also took the River Caves (boats, pump, other machinery); Ghost Train (track, trains, spares, etc), Mistral Flying Machine (Flying Scooters); Sandstorm/Astro Swirl (Meteorite); Caterpillar; Cableway; and Fun House machines (except Joy Wheel and Barrel, which are now at BPB). The Haunted Swing and Mirror Maze are still in situ due to asbestos in the roof. We also left the Crooked House behind as it is riddled with asbestos.

The rides would have all been bulldozed if we had not stepped in as Sefton Council cleared most of the site for Norman Wallis ('Dreamstorm'), who has a lease to run a fun fair there. Things got a bit difficult at times, as the bulldozers entered the site and clearance started before we had finalised arrangements for dismantling the rides. The Council agreed to get them started on clearing the zoo, and leave the rides intact.

Funding for this first tranche of ride dismantling came from the Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company Ltd, the owners of Dreamland, who we are now working alongside to deliver the Heritage Park.

We believe that this project is the best way to secure the long-term future of the Grade 2 listed Scenic Railway at Dreamland and for the distinguished history of the park to be recognised. It is also no exaggeration to say that over the last two or three years most of the country's amusement park heritage outside of Blackpool and Great Yarmouth would have been lost were it not for the Dreamland project. Rides such as the last surviving circular Water Chute (from Rhyl) and the Whip from Blackpool would have been scrapped. It is therefore an ideal way of safeguarding and preserving the UK's amusement park heritage at this critical time.

We are currently in active discussions with a number of other parks, some of which have closed down or are closing, about saving the best and most representative rides of our amusement park heritage. The Dreamland project could not have been better timed and will undoubtedly play a huge role in the regeneration of Margate.

Nick Laister

Chair of Trustees, The Dreamland Trust

www.dreamlandmargate.com

www.savedreamland.co.uk



The ex Southport Catapilar, now in the ownership of the Dreamland Trust.

The Grand Pier Weston-Super-Mare

by Sharon Poole

Subject to both natural and man-made dangers, of the ninety-one pleasure piers that once decorated the British coastline, just fifty-five remain. For over a century, the Grand Pier at Weston has stood as a prominent symbol of this British seaside tradition. For over sixty years, the Grand Pier was owned and run by successive generations of one family: the Brenners. This book is also the story of how they constantly updated and improved the pier, ensuring its popularity with tourists continued into the twenty-first century. But the Grand Pier has also seen its fair share of disaster. The pier rose from the ashes of a devastating fire in 1930 to enjoy a period of great success between the wars. A second fire destroyed the famous pavilion in 2008, and whether the pier can return once again to its former glory remains to be seen. This book illustrates the history of this outstanding example of seaside piers, with memories and anecdotes from the people who owned it, worked on it or simply loved it.

The book is being offered by Joyland Books
at a special discounted price of £10.71 (RRP £12.99).
Please send a cheque for £13.70 (which includes £2.99 p&p), payable to
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THE
GRAND PIER
WESTON-SUPER-MARE

SHARON POOL



ISBN Number: 9780752449906

Format: Paperback

Number of Pages: 128

Publication Date: 2009

Publisher: The History Press

Inside Electro-mech.

By Robert Rowland

Welcome to my new article, a mini series called inside electro-mech. We will be looking at and studying how some of these machines worked, and if there was any chance of working out a reliable system on them.

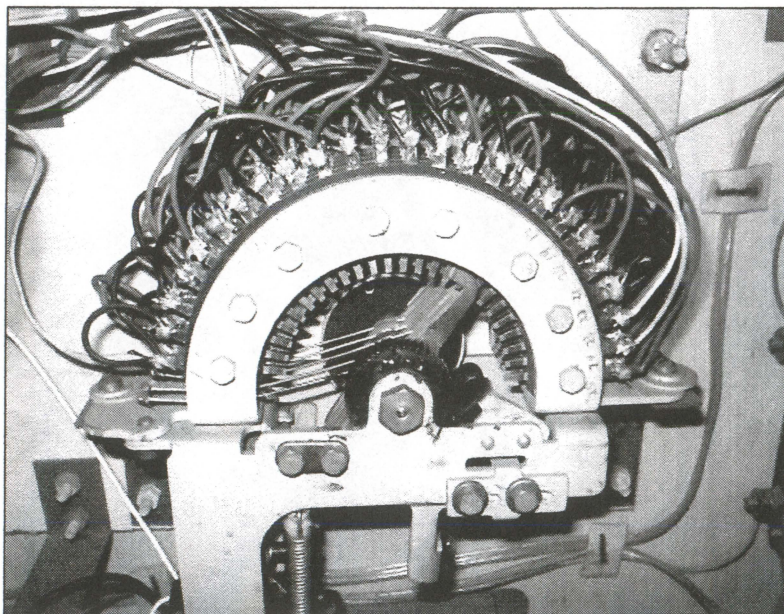
We kick off with **Twinkle Toes**. The game is played by inserting a coin in one of five slots, each corresponding to a different colour, looking from left to right: yellow, blue, orange, red and green. When the start button is pressed, the coloured lights will start to flash in apparently random order, and the payouts (12d, 6d, 4d and 2d) will also flash. When the machine stops, one colour and one payout amount will remain lit. If the colour is the one you bet on, you win the amount indicated.



Any number of colours can be bet on each game, right up to the full five. The machine has no lost; we have a genuine winner every go. No switches or relays to prevent the 12d win from coming up, and a reliable system could be worked out on this machine. It's easy to work out now, but back in the 1960s you would really have needed to see inside the machine to see what was actually happening, and as twelve year old kids, that was never going to happen!

Flasher Unit

This is a GPO 25-way uniselector, which simply does one full turn each time the machine is played, and flashes the coloured stars and payout amounts. It's the same flashing sequence every time, and this unit has no bearing on the final winning colour or payout. When the uniselector completes its cycle and the machine stops, the final winning colour has already been selected.



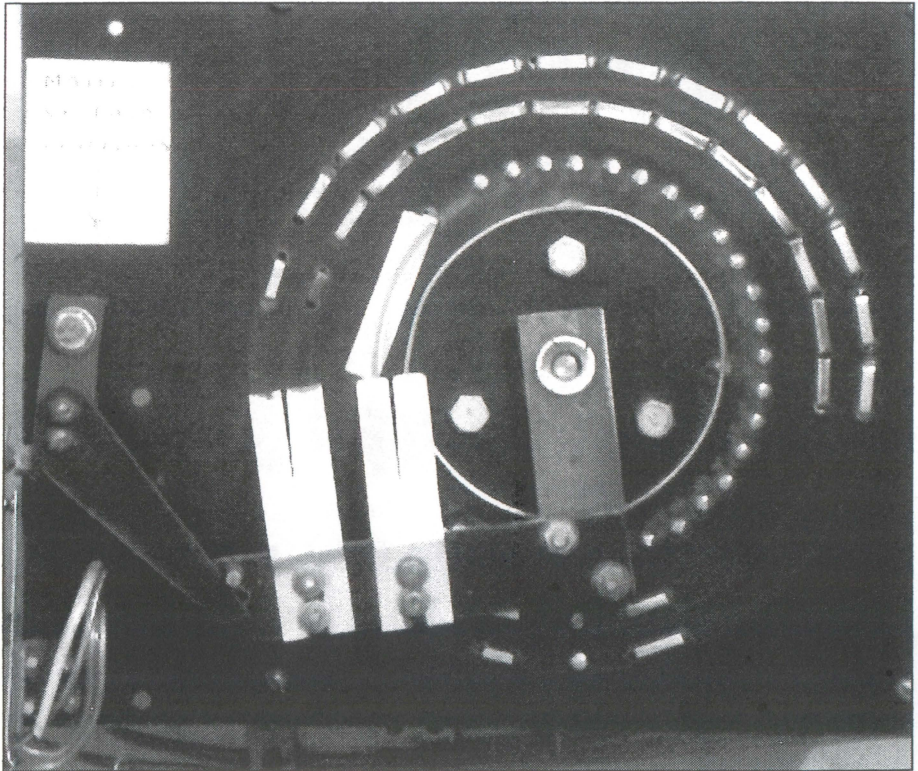
Above, the selector unit – a GPO 25-way uniselector.

Opposite page, Robert's Twinkle Toes. These machines were supplied by Ruffler & Walker and are in exactly the same cases as the R&W allwins (Many Happy Returns, Fill-em-Up etc). The R&W allwins were manufactured by Corteen Ltd., of Erith, Kent.
I wonder whether they also produced Twinkle Toes?

Selector Unit

This unit is a 25-way switch that selects the winning colour and the payout amount as soon as a coin is inserted. This selector moves one position if one colour is bet, moves two positions if two colours are bet, right up to five positions if all five colours are bet. There is only one position that pays the 12d and also one position that pays the 6d win. There are five positions paying 4d, and eighteen positions for a 2d win.

So the winning colour and payout amount are pre-wired into the selector unit (meaning red is the only colour that could pay the 12d, and orange is the only colour that could win you 6d). Basically it's so simple, but of course back in the 1960s not many people could afford to play twenty-five consecutive pennies into one slot, so working out a system was never on the agenda. We had a bit of amusement at the time, which is what it was all about.



The selector which determines the payout sequence.

Every Twinkle Toes was different (sequence wise). I have two. On one, red is the only colour that pays the 12d win, yet on the other, blue pays the 12d. So a worked-out system would only work on that one machine. There were two Twinkle Toes machines in Mablethorpe in the 1960s. One system was useless on the other, and vice-versa.

What was the percentage on this slot?

You can work out what returns each colour would bring by checking the figures below. Example: twenty-five single plays, betting on green every go, would return fourteen coins, whereas twenty-five bets on orange would result in sixteen coins being returned.

Colour	Win Amount
Yellow	2, 2, 2, 2, 4, 2
Blue	4, 2, 4, 2, 2, 2
Orange	4, 2, 2, 6, 2
Red	2, 12
Green	2, 2, 2, 4, 2, 2

The very first Twinkle Toes that I acquired had been tampered with by a past operator. The red 12d win wire had been re-soldered onto the red 2d payout wire on the selector unit, and on the flasher unit, the red 12d payout wire had been re-soldered on to the red 2d payout wire, so the red 12d win never came up! When the red 12d win was due, it showed as red 2d instead. I re-soldered the two wires back onto their original points, and the machine now pays the red 12d win every twenty-five goes as it should.

I hope this article has helped shed a little light on the world of electro-mechanical slots. I have added a little clip of this machine on Youtube, under electro-mechanical wall machine (well worth checking out). Next month we will be reporting on an electro-mech. slot called **Top Ten**, and looking at some surprise hidden secrets that only the operator knew about!

Robert Rowland

Mystery Machine? *(Ok, I know it's a pinball)*

By Stuart Dale

A few weeks ago I was attracted to a rather sad looking pinball machine on an internet auction site. It was showing the usual signs of age and neglect associated with an unrestored machine: missing glass, rusting and corroded parts and at some point the cabinet's outer layers had been stripped back to the bare wood, probably in an aborted attempt at restoration.



Although it had no makers mark, it did have a sticker from Hoopers Automatic Supply Co Ltd, of 146 Pentonville Road London. A quick check in Paul Braithwaite's *Arcades & Slot Machines* book told me that it must date from the mid 1930s. As far as I can tell, Hoopers never made any pinball machines so they must have been agents for the maker. Now, assuming that I am correct so far, can anyone tell me who it was made by? Or for that matter have you got one like it in your collection? If you have why not send a photo to Jerry for the magazine, I am sure we would love to see it.

I did find that when the machine arrived on my doorstep, it was almost complete and I only had a few small repairs to make to the woodwork. When I was working on the cabinet I found an area of original paintwork that pointed me in the direction of the original finish, so off I went to find some matching paint. The backflash had also faded over the years, but once again on stripping the machine I found some of the original blue colour round the very edge of the backflash card, and I was able to carefully replace the faded colour using water colour paint. As for the metalwork, it was a little corroded and in places it was worn through to the brass underneath. I removed the metal parts and re-polished them on my polishing spindle, and then re-plated what parts I could using the Nickel plating process I described in issue 39 of this Magazine.

As for the electrics, the only part that needed special attention was the score coil. This was shorted where someone had poked at it with a screwdriver, and it had to be rewound with No23 swg enamelled copper wire. The rest of the electrical equipment only required a strip and good clean to remove the years of dust and grime. The playing surface of the machine is made from mirror finish stainless steel and makes up part of the 12volt control circuit for keeping the score. As the steel ball rolls down the playfield and hits the springs on the bumpers, a light in the middle of the playfield flashes and the score pointer advances around the dial. There are no flippers on this machine and you get 5 balls for your old penny. It is fun to play and now takes pride of place in my collection.

So there you have it, my lovely new pinball.
All I need now is the **maker's name** anyone?

Stuart Dale

Stuart, I think your new pinball may actually have been made by Hoopers. I'll explain why next month, when I shall hopefully have more space.

Jerry

Boys will be Boys

A short story by Terry Selby

“The vicar wants to see you boys in his study after classes. Prompt!” The instruction came from Miss Trim, our Sunday school teacher. “I think you know why” she said.

We all looked at one another, me, Henry and Itchy Mulligan. “We’re in for it now!” said Itchy, “you know what ‘e’s like!”

I tapped on the door very gently, hoping he wouldn’t hear it, so we could creep away with a clear conscience. “Enter!” the voice behind the door boomed out. None of us wanted to be first through the door, so we jostled each other for back place. “Enter immediately and quietly now!” the instruction boomed.

There was no escape. I opened the door and we crept in. The vicar was sat behind his desk. He linked his fingers together and cracked his knuckles with a look of satisfaction on his face. We quivered. At the far end of the desk sat Miss Sweetlove, a young attractive student teacher, (one of the vicar’s weaknesses) who did the occasional office work when required.

“Right,” said the vicar, “I want to know which one of you is responsible for the dastardly deed inflicted upon Miss Wimple at morning service on Sunday?”

We all stared ahead, muttering that we didn’t know. Miss Wimple was the church organist, a spinster of the parish, very dithery, and some say almost as old as the church itself. But back to the dastardly deed. The church organ was situated by the side of an enormous radiator, which suited Miss Wimple admirably. The three of us always liked to sit in the front pews so we could watch Miss Wimple’s spindly matchstick legs stomping up and down on the organ bass pedals. Sometimes, when she played Onward Christian Soldiers, she’d play it with such drive and emotion, that her little legs would be going up and down like piston rods. This of course gave us much amusement, with the added bonus of watching her black loose woollen stockings tumble slowly down her legs. We would make bets on which would fall down first, left or right.

“Of course you know!” said the vicar, “Because you were seen!” We said nothing. “Very well,” he continued, “Owing to the seriousness of the offence, and the effect it has had on poor Miss Wimple, who has taken to her bed and refuses to be consoled, a just punishment must be enforced!”

“Er, excuse me vicar,” interrupted Miss Sweetlove, “what exactly have they done?” The vicar stood up and gazed at her over his spectacles, acknowledging how much better his view was looking down the front of her blouse, compared to sitting down. “These little urchins,” he said, “obtained from somewhere or other, an old kipper. They then placed it hidden behind the radiator that Miss Wimple sits next to when playing the organ. I don’t have to tell you how bitterly cold it was last Sunday, and she insisted the radiator was turned full on. Well, we’d got to the third verse of All Creatures Great and

Small, and there was this terrible smell. At first, we didn't know where it was coming from. The congregation thought it was me; I thought it was the verger; the verger thought it was the choir, and the choir thought it was Miss Wimple. In the end, we all stared at Miss Wimple, thinking she had some kind of hygiene problem. Unfortunately, she guessed what we were all thinking, and ran out of the church in hysterics." The vicar sat down. "Most upsetting," he said "Dreadful state of affairs."

"Please excuse me vicar," said Miss Sweetlove, turning her face away and shaking uncontrollably, "I must visit the cloakroom." She shot out and slammed the door, and I was sure I could hear shrieks of suppressed laughter coming from the corridor.

We must have looked a pretty sorry bunch, sitting on the dustbins of the church hall kitchen, staring at the horizon totally speechless. The end of the world had come! "I just can't believe it," said Itchy. "How can he do it? It's not right. It's criminal, that's what it is!"

"Yeah," replied Henry, "just 'ow can he do it? Bannin' us from the Sunday school outin'. No fairs! No arcades! No slot machines!" It was the highlight of the year.

"Well, he's done it and there's nothing we can do about it." I said.

"It was your fault," said Itchy, glaring at Henry. "It was your idea."

If it had not been for the scream that came from the side porch of the church hall, the argument would probably have developed into conflict. "Someone's in trouble," said Henry, "C'mon!"

We ran to the porch in time to see Oswald Stubbs trying to wrestle something out of Penelope Carter's hand. They both attended the same Sunday school classes as ours, and Oswald was a bully. Penelope Carter however, was regarded by some as the Sunday school glamour girl. She also loved the slot machines, but her family never had much, so she had to make her own money. This she did by revealing her knickers for two pennies a peep. Needless to say, the boys were seen forming quite long queues, and any casual observer would have been mystified as to why a line of small boys were slowly shuffling their way along to the rear of the cycle sheds.

"What's the matter Penny?" said Itchy, "Is 'e botherin' you?"

"He's trying to grab one of me photo's without paying." She replied. "He's gotta pay like everyone else!" Itchy grabbed Oswald by the scruff of the neck, and warned him off with a few threats. It seemed to do the trick as Oswald wriggled free and ran off down the road, disappearing into the distance.

"What are you up to now, Penny?" asked Henry, with a grin. "You've obviously got a new scheme for makin' some money for the slotters!"

She grinned back. "Thanks for helpin' me," she said, "I'll explain. You see, my uncle's just bought a new camera and he gave me his old one with a load of film for it. Well, at first I wasn't that interested, until Swotty came up with the idea."

Swotty was the class swot at our day school, very brainy, some reckoned he knew more than what the teachers did. "He suggested instead of the peep show, take some photo's and sell 'em for more money. He would sneak into the science lab. when everybody'd gone home, and develop them for a small fee. An' that's what we did. I've been doin' good business! Have you been savin' up for the arcades?"

She saw our faces drop and we explained that we'd been banned from the outing because of what happened with Miss Wimple at the church service on Sunday. "Oh that was so funny!" said Penny, "but it was Oswald who saw you and told the vicar. He told me just now!"

"An' to think we've only just let 'im go!" said Henry.

"Well, there's nothing we can do about it now." I said, "We'll just have to accept it."

"I'm not so sure about that," said Penny, "don't give up yet."

It was the Wednesday before the Saturday outing. Everyone was excited as usual about the forthcoming event, and comparing with each other how much money they had for the amusements and fair. We, on the other hand, were under a deep cloud of gloom as we made our way home from school. "I say you boys, the vicar wants to see you up at the vicarage, six o'clock sharp." It was the old verger, wobbling and doing his best to stay on his battered old bicycle. It wasn't his age that made him so infirm on his bike, it was due more to the small hip flask of whisky hidden under his cassock.

"Oh, what does he want now!" said Itchy, "As if he hasn't done enough already!" We went deeper into our gloom, but were cheered-up a little by seeing the verger fall off his bike and roll into the ditch.

"What was all that about?" said Henry, as we were walking away from the vicarage after seeing the vicar. "I jus' don't understand it!"

"Yeah, all that about 'avin' second thoughts, an' bein' too harsh, an' boys will be boys!" said Itchy.

"Who cares?" I said. "All I know is that we're going on the outing!"

Saturday morning arrived. The train platform was besieged by hoards of small children, eager to get to their seaside destination and the temptation of the arcades. The trip went off much the same as it usually did. That is to say that only one boy risked all, by nearly falling out of the carriage window in an attempt to retrieve a few dropped pennies trapped on an outside ledge. He was hauled back to safety at the last moment by the verger, who promptly sought refuge in his whisky flask.

The three of us sat together in one of the carriages, discussing the merits and drawbacks of different slot machines we hoped to encounter, acknowledging how the queue in the corridor was slowly diminishing. "I reckon she's made a fortune this year!" said Henry, referring to Penny and her photo's. Penny and Swotty were conducting their very enterprising business in the end carriage.

We had arrived. The train had come to a halt at its destination, with enormous clouds of steam coming out of the side of the engine, engulfing us all. "Nice orderly lines please." slurred the verger, speaking through bloodshot eyes. But he was wasting his time. We were gone. We all knew where the arcades were, and there was not a moment to be lost. The verger obviously thought the same, as he headed towards the door of The Railway

Arms. Fortunately, some of the parents had come along as helpers, so we were not totally without supervision.

"Hey, you lot! Glad to see you've made it then." It was Penny, running to catch up, with Swotty in tow.

"We jus' don't understand it," said Henry, "The vicar was ever so nice. He said somethin' about bein' too harsh, and boys will be boys!"

Penny and Swotty smirked at each other "We sorted him out, didn't we Swotty?" giggled Penny, "and it was all due to this." She took a photograph from her bag and handed it to us. The picture wasn't very clear, but it was good enough to make out the vicar and Miss Sweetlove. It was all very innocent really, but it was possibly enough to raise the eyebrows of the Bishop, not to mention the vicars wife.

"How did you manage it?" said Itchy.

"Simple!" said Penny. "Swotty hid in the cassocks cupboard, with the camera. Fortunately, there's a couple of air hole in the door, just enough for the camera lens." She giggled, "Poor old Swotty was in there for two hours!"

"An' what about Miss Sweetlove?" said Henry. "She won't be very happy when she finds out."

"Oh she's alright," replied Penny, "Actually, it was her suggestion!" We were confused. "Oh, I forgot to mention," said Penny, "She's my cousin!"

Henry suggested that we each give her some of our pennies to show our thanks, but she wouldn't hear of it. "No!" she said, "It's me goin' to give you some money." And handed over a pound note. "The vicar gave me five pounds for his photo," she giggled, "now I'll tear this copy up." She neatly deposited the pieces into the litter bin. "C'mon," she said, "the arcades are waiting."

At that moment the verger happened to peer out of the window of the Railway Arms, and saw what Penny was doing. "What are those kidsh up to?" he slurred, "Up to no good, I know." He staggered across to the railway station and up to the litter bin and looked inside. Had the bin been full, there would have been a good chance the pieces would have been lost amongst the rubbish. But it was empty, except for the pieces of the torn photograph. The verger rescued and assembled the pieces on the wall, and began to snigger. "Oh my!" he said, as he slipped the pieces into his pocket, "Very Usheful! Very usheful indeed!"

The verger didn't like the vicar either.

The End

Lineage ads. are free to subscribers and will run for two issues, unless you instruct me otherwise. Please ensure I have your ads. by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the next month's issue. Remember to include your telephone number and the area where you live. Post or e-mail to the address on page 2

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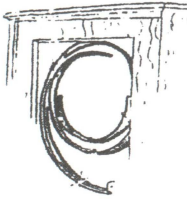
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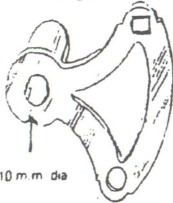


Win Tabs Red printer
on Silver foil sticky
backed 12 on a sheet



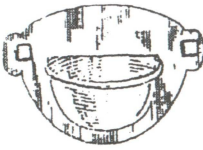
CHROMED 7 ball win
gallery. 6 x 1. 9/16

CHROMED TRIGGER
FRONT

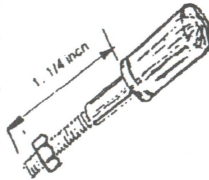


10 m.m. dia

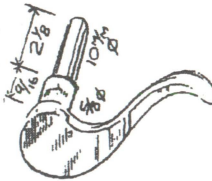
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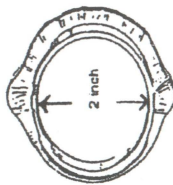


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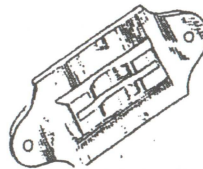
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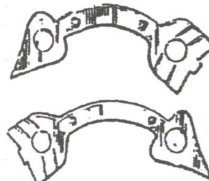
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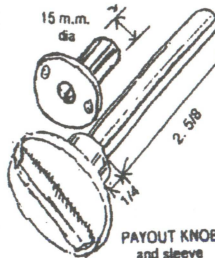
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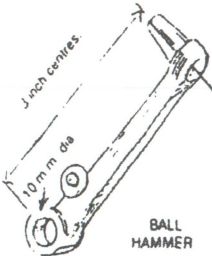
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to suit 2p but can
be filed bigger



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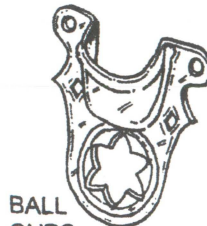


PAYOUT KNOB
and sleeve



BALL
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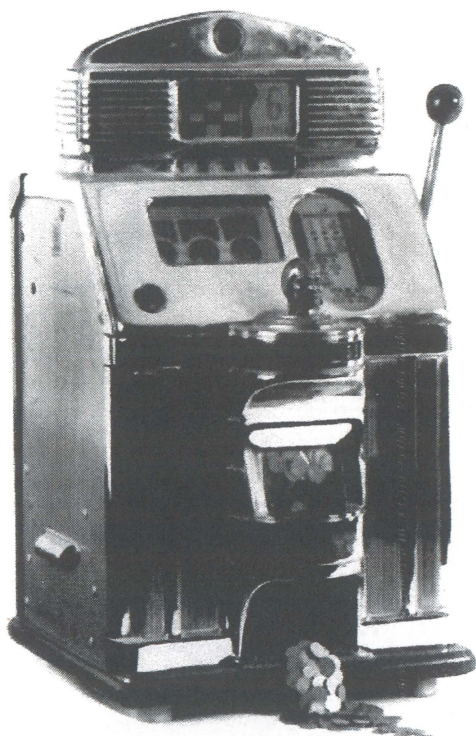
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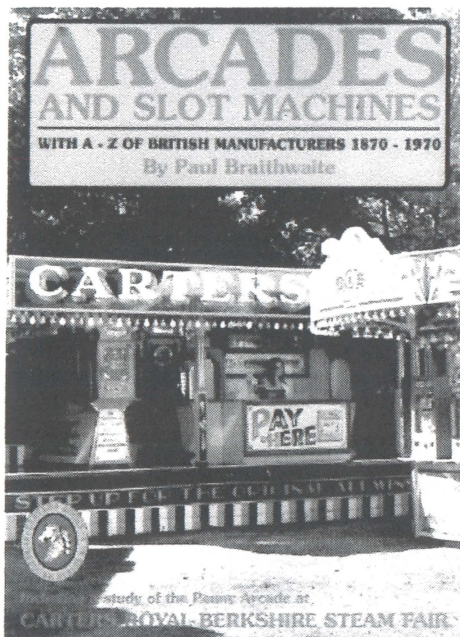
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